

Claims 1-18 (canceled)

19. (new) A device for temporarily shielding the end of a surgical instrument sharp, comprising:

- a housing having a proximal end and a distal end;
- an opening formed in the distal end of the housing for receiving an end of a surgical instrument sharp therethrough;
- a body located in the housing and movable between a first position in which an end of the body obstructs the opening and a second position in which the body is retracted from the opening;
- resilient means for biasing the body into the first position; and
- actuation means to move the body against the action of the resilient means into the second position.

20. (new) The device according to claim 19, wherein the body comprises a piston with a tapered distal end.

21. (new) The device according to claim 19, wherein the resilient means comprises a spring means which is mounted between the proximal end of the body and a stop means within the housing.

22. (new) The device according to claim 21, wherein the spring means comprises a coil spring.

23. (new) The device according to claim 19, in combination with forceps, wherein the device is mounted on the forceps and the resilient means is provided by the resilience of the forceps.

24. (new) The device according to claim 23, in combination with forceps wherein said actuation means comprises a coupling provided between said body of the device and an arm of the forceps.

25. (new) The device according to claim 24, in combination with forceps, wherein the coupling is formed integrally with the body.

26. (new) The device according to claim 19, wherein the opening is defined by a re-entrant end wall portion of the housing.

27. (new) The device according to claim 19, wherein the inner surface of the housing tapers inwardly towards the opening.

28. (new) The device according to claim 19, wherein the actuation means comprises a pullwire secured to the body.

29. (new) The device according to claim 19, wherein at least the end of the body which obstructs the opening can wobble from side to side when the body is in said second position.

30. (new) The device according to claim 19, further comprising first and second arms and said actuation means is coupled to at least one of said first and second arms.

31. (new) The device according to claim 30, wherein said actuation means is a coupling provided between said body of the device and the at least one of said first and second arms.

32. (new) The device according to claim 31, wherein said coupling is a support bar.

33. (new) The device according to claim 30, wherein said actuation means is integrally formed with said body.

34. (new) The device according to claim 30, wherein said first and second arms are spring biased towards or away from each other and the resilient means is provided by the spring bias of said first and second arms.

35. A device for temporarily shielding the end of a surgical instrument sharp, comprising:

- a housing having a proximal end and a distal end;
- an opening formed in the distal end of the housing for receiving an end of a surgical instrument sharp therethrough;
- a body located in the housing and movable between a first position in which an end of the body obstructs the opening and a second position in which the body is retracted from the opening;
- first and second arms movable relative to each other;

- a support bar to couple the body to one of said first and second arms; and
- wherein movement of the first and second arms relative to each other causes the support bar to move the body between said first and second positions.